Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ADDIS 10494 231643Z

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 EB-07

OC-06 CCO-00 COME-00 LAB-04 SIL-01 /073 W
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1047
INFO AMCONSUL ASMARA

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 10494

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT
SUBJECT: NEW OUTBREAKS OF VIOLENCE IN CAPITAL

REF: ADDIS ABABA 10465

SUMMARY: CONTINUED STRIKE ACTIVITY AND STUDENT-LABOR UNREST HAVE LED TO INCIDENTS OF VIOLENCE THROUGHOUT ADDIS ABABA. ALTHOUGH PARTIAL UTILITIES AND TRANS-PORTATION WORK STOPPAGES, WHICH BEGAN MORNING SEPT.22, SEEM TO HAVE BEEN EITHER RESOLVED OR FORCIBLY RE-PRESSED, OTHER WORKERS HAVE FAILED TO REPORT TO WORK TODAY, AND EMPLOYEES FROM ETHIOPIAN AIRLINES AND SEVERAL FACTORIES ARE REPORTEDLY MEETING TO DECIDE WHETHER TO GO ON STRIKE. SHOOOTING AND ROCK-THROWING INCIDENTS, WHICH BROKE OUT BRIEFLY WEDNESDAY AFTERNNOON AND EVENING, CONTINUED INCITY TODAY. THROUGHOUT MORNING EMBASSY WAS RECEIVING SCATTERED REPORTS OF DEMONSTRATIONS, INJURIES, AND NUMEROUS ARRESTS, ALTHOUGH AFTERNOON RECONNAISSANCE FOUND CITY CALM AGAIN. THERE IS POSSIBILITY THAT 9:00 P.M. CURFEW WILL BE IMPOSED IN ADDIS FOR WEEKEND, BEGINNING TONIGHT. GRIEVANCES APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN TOUCHED OFF IN LARGE MEASURE BY DISSATISFACTION OVER MONTARY REFORM, ALTHOUGH EPRP ELEMENTS HAVE ALSO GOTTEN INTO ACT.
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 ADDIS 10494 231643Z

END SUMMARY.

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

1. IN ADDITION TO STRIKES REPORTEDREFTEL THROUGHTOUT CITY, 70-80 PERCENT OF BANK TELLERS AND CLERKS STAYED AWAY FROM WORK DURING MORNING OF SEPT. 22. AFTERNOON BROUGHT SOME WORKERS BACK, BUT NOT MAJORITY. THURSDAY, BANK WORKERS REPORTED, BUT HAVE REFUSED TO CARRY OUT NORMAL TRNASACTIONS, AND LONG QUEUES OF CITIZENS WISHING TO CHANG MONEY HAVE FORMED.

2. SOME UTILITY WORKERS HAVE BEEN ON STRIKE SINCE WEDNESDAY MORNING. AT PRESENT THIS NOT AFFECTING NORMAL OPERATIONS BECAUSE OF AUTOMATED NAUTRE OF WATER AND ELECTRIC SERVICES, BUT IN EVENT OF BREAKDOWNS OR NORMAL MAINTENANCE REQUIREMENTS, CONSEQUENCE FOR CITY COULD BE SERIOUS.

3. ALTHOUGH NATIONAL BUS COMPANY IS RUMORED TO BE ON STRIKE, THIS DIFFICULT TO SUBSTANTIATE BECAUSE BUS SERVICE QUITE EVIDENT AFTERNNON OF SEPT 22, AND MORNING SEPT.23. HOWEVER, DECREASE IN NUMBER OF BUSES AP-PARENT, AND SOME OF THOSE IN OPERATION HAVE BEEN STONED BY DEMONSTRATORS.

4. TEXTILE WORKERS AT TWO NATIONAL FIRMS BEGAN PARTIAL STRIKE ON SEPT. 22 WHICH HAS BECOME FULL STRIKE BY BOTH ON SEPT. 23. THREAT OF WORK STOPPAGE BY ALL 2,700 EMPLOYEES OF NATIONAL IMPORT-EXPORT DISTRIBUTION FIRM HAS BEE REPORTED BY RELIABLE SOURCE. WORKERS AT ETHIOPIAN AIRLINES WERE TO VOTE SEPT. 23 WHETHER TO STRIKE OR NOT.

5. PROLIFERATION OF STRIKES MUST BE SEEN AGAINST BACKDROP OF STUDENT ARRESTS, (AFTERNOON SEPT.22), INTENSE EPMG CAMPAIGN AGAINST "ANARCHISITC, ANTI-REVOLUTIONARY, REACTIONARY OFFSPRING OF OLD FEUDAL RULERS" (ERPR, EDU), APPROACH OF TWO MAJOR RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS (END OF RAMADAN SEPT. 24 AND MASKAL SEPT. 27) AND WORSENING IMPLEMENAION PROBLEMS OF CURRENCY PROCLAMATION. AS INDICATED REFEL, AMANY PERSONS HAVE BEEN ADVERSELY AFFECTED, HOWEVER SLIGHT, BY CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 ADDIS 10494 231643Z

SURCHARGE ON LARGE DENOMINATION BILLS. MOREOVER, MASSES FAIL TO UNDERSTAND REASONS FOR REFORM AND CONSIDER IT TO BE GOVERNMENT TRICK TO DEPRIVE THEM OF THEIR SAVINGS.

6. ANOTHER MAJOR CAUSE OF STRIKES AS RELATED BY RELIABLE SOURCE IS ARRESTS OF "REVOLUTIONARY DISCUS-SION GROUP (RDG)" LEADERS DURING PAST FIFTEEN DAYS.

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

RDGS WERE ORGANIZED BY PROVISIONAL OFFICE OF PEOPLE'S ORGANIZATIONAL AFFARIS (POPO) OSTENSIBLY TO EDUCATE THE BROAD MASSES OF WORKERS IN THE PROGRAMS OF THE ONGOING REVOLUTION. (COMMENT: POPO IS POLITBURO OF ADVISORS DIRECTLY RESPONSIBLE TO DIRG, WHO PROVIDE IDEOLOGICAL THRUST OF ETHIOPIAN REVOLUTION. END COMMENT.) ONCE RDGS WERE FORMED, MEMBERS ELECTED OFFICERS TO PRESENT RESOLUTIONS OF GROUPS TO EPMG. RATHER THAN BECOMING MOUTHPIECES OF POPO, RDGS HAVE TAKEN INCREASINGLY INDEPENDENT POSITIONS, CALLING FOR A "PROVISIONAL PEOPLE'S GOVERNMENT" AND RELEASE OF POLITICAL PRISONERS. IN CASE OF IMPORT-EXPORT DISTRIBUTORS, PRESSURRE ON EPMG RESULTED IN INITAILA RELEASE OF THEIR RDG CHAIMAN. SUBSEQUENTLY HE WAS REARESTED AND REMAINS IN JAIL DESPITE FURTHER PROTESTATIONS. SOUCE COMMENTED ARREST OF RDG LEAERS HAS BEEN EXTENSIVE. THIS WAS CONFIRMED BY SECOND SOURCE WHO SAID 70-100 TEXTILE WORKERS WHO INVOLVED IN ANTI-EPMG DISCUSSION HAS BEEN ARRESTED PAST WEEK.

7. EPMG PARAMOIA OVER EPRP NOT WHOLLY UNJUSTIFIED. SUNDAY NIGHT SEPT .19 ERPR LEAFLETS REITERATING DEMAND FOR "PROVISIONAL PEOPLE'S GOVERNMENT" SPREAD THROUGHOUT ADDIS. THERE IA ALSO PERSISTENT RUMOR FROM NON-EPMG SOURCES OF EPRP-EDU COORDINATION OF MILITARY OPERATIONS IN GOJJAM AND PROSPECT OF SAME IN ADDIS IF EFFORTS IN GOJJAM SUCCESSFUL. WHILE WIDE IDEOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES CONTINUE, PRIMARY OBJECTIVE OF OVERTHROWING DIRG APPARENTLY HAS UNITED TWO GROUPS FOR THE MOMENT. ALTHOUGH STUDENTS, EDU, AND EPRP DEMANDS ON EPMG ARE SIMILAR, WE ARE NOT ABLE TO DETERMINE THE EXTENT CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 ADDIS 10494 231643Z

OF COORDINATION IF ANY AMONG THESE GROUPS AT PRESENT I ADDIS.

8. SOME 12TH YEAR ZEMETCHA HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS WHO NOW COMPLETING FINAL YEAR OF SCHOOL INTERRUPTED BY FEB. 74 BEGINNIN GOF REVOLUTION HAVE BEEN ARRESTED WITHIN PAST FEW DAYS FOR ALLEGEDLY WRITING AND CIRCULATING DEMANDS FOR RETURN T CIVIL GOVERNMENT. SHOOTING INCIDENTS BEGAN YESTERDAY IN LOCAL MARKET (MERKATO) AREA, WHEN SEVERAL PERSONS WER HIT BY INDISCRIMINATE FIRING,(WE KNOW OF ONE KILLED) PROVOKED BY STONE-THROWING AND ANTI-GOVERNMENT CHANTING. EPMG FORCES TODAY HAVE BEEN CALLED OUT TO BREAK UP DEMONSTRATIONS IN VARIOUS PARTS OF CITY, FURTHER SHOOTINGS HVE OCCURRED AND WE HAVE

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

REASONABLY FIRM REPORTS OF NUMEROUS ARRESTS OF OTHER STUDENTS. ONE LARGE DEMONSTRATION INCLUDED PLACARDS, PROCLAIMING "UP WITH THEE EPRP, DOWN WITH MENGISTU" AND "EPRP IS THE PEOPLE, WHAT IS THE DIRG?" AT MIDAFTERNOON, HOWEVER, CITY AGAIN APPEARS CALM.

9. IN ANY EVENT, EPMG IS SUFFICIENTLY NERVOUS THAT IT IS CONSIDERING IMPOSING 9:00 P.M. CURFEW, BEGINNING TONIGHT AND EXTENDING THROUGH WEEKEND. IT HAS ADVISED EMBASSY THAT ROADS OUT OF ADDIS ARE NOT SAFE, OWING TO DISTURBANCES CAUSED BY PEASANTS' ORGANIZATION DISSATISFACTION OVER FACT THAT THEY, LIKE OTHERS, HAVE NOT BEEN PERMITTED TO DEPOSIT THEIR CASH AT FACE VALUE.
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Margaret P. Grafeld
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EO Systematic Review
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